

# Stepping Stones Children's Learning Centre Parent Handbook And Operating Policies

**Box 345 117 Windsor Dr.  
Brockville, Ontario  
K6V 3H7**

Phone # (613) 213-1516  
Or (613) 213-1580  
[Steppingstonesclcl@gmail.com](mailto:Steppingstonesclcl@gmail.com)

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Dear Parents:

The Director, Supervisor and Staff welcome your child(ren) and family to our Centre. We look forward to having a pleasant association with you. We have prepared this handbook so that you will know what you can expect from us and what we will expect of you. We have included many of our policies and procedures, so that our operations are transparent and informative. Our practices are guided by the Child Care Early Years Act, 2014, the College of Early Childhood Educators' Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice, How Does Learning Happen? and our own Policies and Procedures. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us and we will be happy to help you.

Thank you,

Karrie Heward, Rina Dillabough, Yvonne Barbour and Sarah Buchholz  
Directors R.E.C.E

### **Program Statement**

Stepping Stones Children's Learning Centre is dedicated to supporting children's learning, development, health and well-being through caring and responsive Early Childhood Educators, who focus on active learning, exploration, play and inquiry, and who see children and their families as competent and able, and as active participants in all aspects of the program. A key feature of the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014, is the focus on strengthening child care programs and ensuring high quality experiences for children. The CCEYA authorizes the Minister of Education to issue policy statements regarding programming and pedagogy for the purpose of guiding operators of child care and early year's programs. How does learning happen? Ontario's pedagogy for the Early Years (2014) is the document used by Stepping Stones Children's Learning Centre. The document has a strong pedagogical focus, indicating that the pedagogy is not a prescriptive formula that lays out a specific curriculum or activities but instead challenges the status quo and explores how learning happens for children. How Does Learning Happen? is organized around four foundational conditions that are considered essential to optimal learning and healthy development for children:

**Belonging** refers to a sense of connectedness to others, an individual's experiences of being valued, of forming relationships with others and making contributions as part of a group, a community, the natural world.

**Well-being** addresses the importance of physical and mental health and wellness. It incorporates capacities such as self-care, sense of self, and self-regulation skills.

**Engagement** suggests a state of being involved and focused. When children are able to explore the world around them with their natural curiosity and exuberance, they are fully engaged.

Through this type of play and inquiry, they develop skills such as problem solving, creative thinking, and innovating, which are essential for learning and success in school and beyond.

**Expression** or communication (to be heard, as well as to listen) may take many different forms. Through their bodies, words, and use of materials, children develop capacities for increasingly complex communication. Opportunities to explore materials support creativity, problem solving, and mathematical behaviours. Language-rich environments support growing communication skills, which are foundational for literacy.

**The four foundations apply regardless of the child's age, ability, culture, language, geography, or setting.** Unlike a structured curriculum, the conditions are high states of being that children naturally seek for themselves and should not be viewed as separate elements.

**Goals:**

- All staff will promote the health, safety, nutrition and well-being of each child by providing a clean and safe environment, nutrition based on the Canada's Food Guide, access to drinking water throughout the day, limited transitions, eliminating any environmental issues that may cause undue stress to the child, unnecessary disruptions to play and reducing hazards that may cause injury. Educators will familiarize themselves with all information concerning any medical conditions, exceptionalities, allergies, food restrictions, medication requirements, and parental preferences in respect to diet, exercise and rest time.
- All staff will support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents, and child care providers. The Director/Supervisor will support this through the hiring of qualified, responsive, and well trained Early Childhood Educators who support families in their role as primary caregivers, and understand the needs of each child as an individual.
- All staff will encourage children to interact and communicate in a positive way, and support their ability to self-regulate; acknowledging that each child is competent, curious and rich in potential. Staff will support self-regulation in children (defined as the child's ability to gain control of bodily functions, manage powerful emotions and maintain focus and attention) Self-regulation in early development is influenced by a child's relationship with the important adults in that child's life, including the ECEs in the program. All staff will provide the experiences, support and encouragement that help young children learn to self-regulate, which is a crucial component of quality care.
- All staff will foster the children's exploration, play and inquiry by providing a variety of activities, and an environment rich in content, that encourages choices, and active play, supported by qualified, attentive and interactive Early Childhood Educators
- All Staff will provide child-initiated and adult supported experiences. The Early Childhood Educators will observe the children and use that information to plan and create a positive learning environment that is based on the interests of the child, and supported by all the adults in the child care environment. Educators will be responsible for introducing new ideas, interests, facts, concepts, skills and experiences to widen the child's knowledge and life experiences.
- All Early Childhood Educators need to be reflective practitioners who learn about children through listening, observation, documentation, and discussion with others, families in particular, to understand children as unique individuals. They will observe and listen to learn how children make meaning through their experiences in the world around them, and use this to have meaningful interactions, and engage children on a daily basis.
- Each child will experience indoor, and two hours of outdoor play (weather permitting) daily, as well as a time to rest and sleep if needed, quiet and active times, always being mindful of each child's needs and parental direction.
- Regular and ongoing communication with parents is an important component of the day. Communication may be in person, by phone, e-mail or through written and posted

communication tools. Communication needs to come from all members of the organization, the Director, the Supervisor and all staff.

- Parents will be directed to resources outside of the centre if necessary and community partners such as early year's services, speech therapists, support services, occupational therapists, counselors, etc., this will be an important part of the centres support to all children and their families. We view the community as a valuable resource and our educators plan learning opportunities to engage the community in our programs. We seek out opportunity to share our knowledge and to learn from others in the community
- The organization will provide ongoing opportunities for educators to engage in critical reflection and discussion with others about pedagogy and practice, to support continuous professional learning.
- All staff will build a climate of trust, honesty and respect in the workplace, working collaboratively in order to provide a safe, secure, healthy and inviting environment for all children and their families, building and maintaining healthy professional relationships that encourage growth and offering support and mentorship.
- **Our Extended Day Programs: Before, After School Days, & Full Day PD Programs**
- Our extended day program for 4-5 year olds and 6-9 years of age is in keeping with our vision, to provide children and families with a seamless day from child care to the school day. At this particular age, children are looking for challenges and opportunities to help plan their activities all while building self-esteem and discovering their talents through social, emotional, physical and cognitive play. Our overriding goal is to support children through this discovery and provide environments that are safe, fun, hands-on and play based.

Stepping Stones Children's Learning Centre wants to ensure that all children have a safe and positive experience that promotes their growth as a learner. To this end, the Director or designate will observe staff interactions with children ensuring that they align with our program statement and beliefs in adult-child interactions. The following practices are not supported by our facility:

#### **Registration:**

A child cannot be admitted to the Centre without the completion of the appropriate forms. These include personal information about your child, health records, emergency and medical information, and any permission forms. When completing the registration, package include the days of the week and times that your child will attend the Centre. For example: your child may attend either mornings, afternoons or both. However, to allow for proper staffing, schedules of children must remain constant for each week. We are unable to accommodate a varying schedule of days that correlates to shift work etc. All forms should be given to the Supervisor prior to your child's first day. There is a nonrefundable \$25.00 registration fee, payable to the centre upon receiving your child's application form. A visit to the school age program before your child can be enrolled is mandatory, where possible. A September (first day of school) start may not allow for a visit prior to your child starting.

#### **Parent Agreement:**

All parents are required to sign an agreement with Stepping Stones Children's Learning Centre prior to the child attending the Centre. The form is to protect both the parent and the Program's interests. For some new parents, there are many questions about the Centre that can only be answered once the child is enrolled. It is for this reason that SSCLC offers two visits prior to starting. If families are unsure as to whether or not daycare is for them or will not fully meet their needs, there is no financial obligations such as two weeks' notice.

### **Immunization:**

Your child must have been immunized to attend our programs, as required by the Immunization of School Pupils Act (1990). For information on what immunizations are necessary, please contact your doctor or your local public health office (613-345-5685). If your child is not immunized, for either medical, conscience or religious beliefs, the Centre requires a completed affidavit, that has been notarized. In the event that your child is not immunized, and an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease occurs, your child will be excluded from attending the program for the duration of the outbreak.

### **Fee payment Policy/ payment options**

**Payment** can be made by Cheques, debit or cash. Cheques are to be made out to **Stepping Stones**. There is a \$55.00 charge for all NSF Cheques. After three NSF Cheques, payment will only be accepted in cash/debit or in the form of a certified Cheques, or money order.

**Please note that fees are due regardless of attendance. Adjustments are not made to accommodate for sick days, vacation, closure due to inclement weather or other emergency closures.** Winter closures due to weather will be announced on local FM stations, please listen to 104.9 JR FM and 103.7 BOB FM. You may also call the Centre and listen to the voice mail, which will notify you of any closures. Fees are also applicable for statutory holidays during the school year. These include: Family Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Civic, and Thanksgiving Day. We are not open Easter Monday. Stepping Stones closes at 5:30 pm December 23 to and January 2. You will not be charged for non-stat days during this time frame.

If payment is not received, your service may be suspended. Please mark the dates you are paying for, clearly on the front of your Cheques or the envelope. Cheques or money order or debit is preferred but cash will be accepted. Please put the correct amount in an envelope and clearly mark your name and the amount on the front of the envelope. Please make sure a staff member has made note of payment. An official income tax receipt will be issued to you in **January**.

### **Illness:**

When your child is, ill and will not be attending the program, please inform the Centre as soon as possible. This can be done via text, e-mail or phone call. **Again, you will still be required to pay your regular fees if your child does not attend.** If your child is picked up early from school or goes home sick, please call the centre and leave a message on the machine so that the staff is not waiting to pick them up from school.

A child with **head lice/nits, diarrhea, vomiting, a fever of 100.4 degrees or more, or with unknown marks or rashes** **will not be admitted to the program**. Staff has the right to refuse a

child due to illness at their discretion. Children with **pink eye (conjunctivitis)** will also be sent home but can return once they have received eye drops for 24 hours.

NOTE: children with illness are to be symptom free for 48 hours as per health unit guidelines before returning to the centre. There are times in which due to the number of ill children that this time frame may become 72 hours' symptom free. **You can verify this with our local health unit.** If you need help with understanding the reasoning or how to prevent prolonged illness the health unit will assist you. (613-345-5685).

### **Medication and Individualized Medical Plan:**

All medications given to your child must be accompanied by a Medication Record, please ask the Supervisor for these forms. Staff cannot administer medication unless it is prescribed by a doctor and must be in the original container with the child's name, time, dosage, name of medication and doctor clearly labeled.

Below is the centre's

### **Medication Policy:**

#### **Administering Medication:**

The Centre will administer non-prescription medication to a child only if approved by a doctor and prescription medication to a child only if a doctor prescribes it. **Only** the Supervisor, Assistant Supervisor or designate in the absence of both the Supervisor and Assistant Supervisor will administer the medication. Medications that are administered on a regular basis such as inhalers may be given by the full-time staff in the classroom. Appropriate forms, must be filled in and signed and kept on file both in the child's file and the child's classroom. This must be approved by the Supervisor

**All medications must be in its original container with the child's name, dosage and name of the medication and the doctor's name. Medication in a sibling or parents name will not be administered**

**No over the counter medications such as Tylenol, Advil, Motrin or Cough medication will be administered by any staff unless accompanied by written recommendation by the child's doctor. This also applies to all homeopathic medication**

#### **Procedures of administering medication:**

- 1) Written permission must be given by the parent/guardian of the child by filling out a "Medication Record" located outside the office
- 2) The "Medication Record" must be maintained for each child on a daily basis while administering the medication
- 3) On the "Medication Record", the parent will include such details as time, dosage, side effects, storage and any special instructions. Staff must check that the parent's written instructions match any instructions printed on the original container and that the medication is NOT expired.

- 4) The Supervisor or designate will sign the "Medication Record" each time the medication is dispensed. Completed medication forms will remain in the child's file for three years
- 5) The medication will remain in its original container, clearly labeled with the child's name, purchase date, name of medication, dosage and instructions for storage and administration
- 6) All medication must be stored as directed and in a locked container. Any medication that has to be refrigerated will be stored in the fridge in a locked container. Nonprescription medication will be stored in the Supervisor's office in a locked container
- 7) Side effects should be watched for after giving the child medication. If a child becomes ill, notify the Supervisor
- 8) Please make sure all medication goes home with the parents at the end of the day with the exceptions of onsite inhalers or Epi-pens
- 9) The staff is to give completed medication forms to the Supervisor or designate immediately. Staff are also responsible for taking note of the medication schedule and reminding the Supervisor/designate of the scheduled times for administering the medication
- 10) All medication must be inaccessible to children
- 11) Leftover medication must be returned to the parent or guardian
- 12) All medication must be dispensed in a well-lit area

### **Service Termination:**

If circumstances change and you plan on altering your child's schedule to fewer days or withdrawing your child from the centre, please note that we require **WRITTEN NOTICE** two weeks in advance of the withdrawal date. Fees must be paid up to and including your child's last day, prior to withdrawal. Payment in lieu of notice will apply in the event that withdrawal notice is given within less than two weeks of the child's final date of attendance. This payment shall be equal to two weeks of fees regardless of attendance. For example: if only one weeks notice is received, fee payment for two weeks will be applied to the account. (the week attended plus the additional week) Parents would have the option of continuing to attend for the final week as well.

### **Hours of Operation:**

The Program opens at 7.30 am Monday to Friday. Children will be taken into their classroom and picked up. The Program closes promptly at 5.30pm.

### **Fees for 2017:**

- Infant Full Time      \$38.75    Part Time \$42.85    ½ Day N/A
- Toddler Full Time    \$34.70    Part Time \$35.70    ½ Day \$29.60
- Pre-School Full Time \$31.10    Part Time \$32.65    ½ Day \$25.50
- Before School \$7.15                      After School \$9.45    Before/After School \$16.50 PD  
   Days            \$29.10                      Early Dismissal \$20.90

Rates may increase annually. Parents will be given sufficient notices of rate changes.

### **Late Fees:**

Late fee charges will apply after 5:30pm. The fee of \$25.00 for the first 15 minutes or part thereof (per child) past 5:30pm, and \$25.00 every 15-minute following 5:31pm will be paid directly to the staff member to compensate for their overtime. Calling ahead to say that you will be arriving late is appreciated but it does not excuse you from paying the late fee. The Centre closes promptly at 5:30 pm, please ensure that your child is picked up before this time.

### **General Program Information:**

#### **Ratios of staff to children:**

Infants	1:3
Toddler	2:10
Pre-School	2:16
School age	1:15 but only have space for 3

#### **Drop off and Pick up**

We must insist that you bring your child into the room and personally greet a staff member so that they are aware your child has arrived. The same applies for the evening. Please say goodnight so that we can mark your child off on the attendance and tell you about your child's day.

#### **Pick Up:**

Please make sure that if you cannot pick up your child, you inform your child's teacher who will be picking them up by phone or in person. Please do not e-mail. Please make sure:

- The person is familiar to your child
- Is on the authorized list to pick up your child
- Has and is willing to show a picture I.D.
- Is over the age of 16.

An intoxicated person (yourself included) will be denied access to pick up any child for safety reasons. Please make sure that the person designated to pick up your child has an appropriate car seat for your child

#### **Nutrition:**

Snacks and lunch following recommendations from Canada's Food Guide will be provided in the before and after school programs. Menu plans are posted in the hall on our Parent board. Any changes made to the menu schedule will also be noted accordingly. Please remember that these are snacks only and are not meant to replace the child's breakfast at home. Stepping Stones is nut free. Food allergies will be posted in the child's room. Plans will be in place for any children with food allergies. All precautions will be made to protect children with food allergies however we cannot guarantee that food other children may bring in their bags do not contain or have come into contact with peanuts and/or nut products.

#### **Sleep/Rest Time**

Infants: Stepping Stones Children's Learning Centre ensures that any child who is younger than 12 months and receives care at Stepping Stones operates sleep in a manner consistent with the

recommendations set out in the document entitled “Joint Statement on Safe Sleep: Preventing Sudden Infant Deaths in Canada”, unless the child’s physician recommends otherwise in writing. Infants sleep in the sleep room attached directly to the nursery. Each infant has their own crib and crib sheet that is labelled on the wall above their crib. Sufficient lighting in the sleep area is provided and direct visual check are preformed and documented every 20 minutes. Parents will be consulted upon enrolment in regards to sleeping routines and again during transitions to the toddler program and upon parent requests. Changes in sleeping patterns or behaviours during sleep will be communicated to parents and changes will be made accordingly.

Toddlers and Preschool: Stepping Stones Children’s Learning Centre ensures that the toddler and preschool children are provided sleep/quiet rest time for minimum 45 min and maximum 2 hours when attending our full day program. This time is generally from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Each child is provided their own cot and cot sheet. Their name is written on their cot. We advise a thin labelled blank to rest with for warmth and comfort. This blanket will stay on their bed for the week and be sent home on Friday for cleaning unless it is other wise needed. The toddlers are located on the left side of the gym and preschoolers on the right. Staff will sit beside the children in the gym until they are asleep. Once they are sleeping the staff will be located directly outside the gym doors and will perform direct visual checks every 20-30 minutes for restlessness and or signs of distress. At 2:15 the children awake will go down to the class room for free play. Any changes in the sleep routine or cots will be communicated to the parents.

### **Parking:**

There are plenty of parking spaces available in the church parking lot. There may be limited spaces on occasions when a church service in being held, CPHC, Senior lunch etc. In the event the lot is full there is parking on Windsor Dr. and Cuthbertson that can be accessed through the path beside the park.

### **Smoking Policy:**

Smoking on school grounds including the Childcare Centre is strictly prohibited.

### **Children’s Personal Belongings:**

Please ensure any items are labeled with your child’s name. Stepping Stones Children’s Learning Centre is not responsible for any lost or damaged items.

### **Role of Parents in the Program:**

We would like all parents to feel free to offer what their children are expressing interests in, to expand on their interests at the daycare, create a small photo album of their family, pets, favourite items that can stay at the centre, ask about their child’s day or for anything that might help create a positive environment for their child. In doing this we improve communication between parents and teachers.

### **Process for expressing concerns:**

The Director and/or Supervisor will always be present to meet with parents who have concerns about our Centre. Day to day concerns will be dealt with as quickly as possible. Please feel free

to call at 613-213-1516 to speak to either: Karrie Heward, Sarah Buchholz, Rina Dillabough or Yvonne Barbour Directors between 8am and 4pm or e-mail at [steppingstonesclc1@gmail.com](mailto:steppingstonesclc1@gmail.com) Attn to one or all named above.

### **Water Play Tables**

Children have a lot of fun with water play tables. Water tables that are used are filled with fresh water each time they are used. They are cleaned and disinfected after every use along with the toys and materials that were used in the play. We ensure the children and staff wash their hands using the six-step hand washing procedure before and after water play. Children that are under the weather are excluded from water play and participate in a different activity.

### **Play Pools**

Stepping Stones does not use play pools for children. Sprinklers, hoses, or individual water buckets are used as safer alternatives.

### **Sanitary Practices**

The cleanliness of the programs is vital to providing quality child care. It is up to all staff members to do their part in maintaining sanitary conditions. Policies and procedures regarding sanitation shall be reviewed at the commencement of employment. At this time the employee shall be made aware that he/she shall abide by the regulations set out by following: The Public Health Unit, The Day Nurseries Act, The Environmental Protection Act, Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Municipal By-Laws

Cleaning instructions are posted where necessary and communicated appropriately to all staff. Staff of Stepping Stones performs daily cleaning, including daily cleaning of all of the floors, garbage removal, and general cleaning. Each Program that is in permitted space is cleaned by caretaker.

### **Monitoring of Prohibited Practices and Disciplinary Action:**

The following are prohibited practices at Stepping Stones Children's Learning Centre and may result in immediate termination of employment:

#### **No staff shall:**

- Lock or permit to be locked for the purpose of confining a child the exits of a day nursery
- Use a locked or lockable room or structure to confine a child who has been withdrawn from other children
- Abuse a child physically, verbally or emotionally
- Deprive the child of basic needs including food, shelter, clothing or bedding
- Use corporal punishment of a child
- Use deliberate use of harsh or degrading measures on the child that would humiliate the child or undermine his or her self-respect.

### **Safe Schools:**

Stepping Stones Children's Learning Centre Before and After School programs are commitment to assisting children in self-regulation, and building on the four foundations of How Does Learning Happen? We also want to foster a positive school climate in line with the Boards of

Education policies. Children will be encouraged to problem solve whenever possible. However; if a child is in danger of injury or damage to the surrounding area is apparent, then staff will intervene. In a situation where a child is aggressive towards other children or staff, the staff member may be required to call the parent to pick the child up. Inappropriate language, bullying, intimidation, discrimination, disrespectful or aggressive behaviours cannot be tolerated. Every effort will be made to work together with our families and children to increase the child's self-regulation skills in order to prevent repetition of these behaviours. Please be aware however, that after repeated incidents of the above behaviours, your child may be suspended from the program or asked to leave.

### **Procedures and practices for facilitation of self-regulation and child guidance:**

- All children will be guided in a positive manner that is appropriate to their age and developmental level
- Staff will model or demonstrate proper procedure, or behaviour, with a direct explanation
- Staff will use clear language, supportive voices and encouragement
- Staff will use positive verbal guidance, which is non-accusatory and respectful; labelling, and validating a child's feelings, and clarifying the rules and responsibilities.
- Staff will actively listen to all children and respond in a sensitive manner.
- Staff will state rules and requests in a positive tone
- Staff will reinforce appropriate behaviour, using social reinforcement such as a smile, or a hug, an activity reinforcement, such as engaging in a desired activity, effective praise, that is selective, specific and positive and/or asking the child to engage in self-reflection, assisting them to recognize their own accomplishments
- Staff will ignore **non-disruptive** inappropriate behaviour
- Staff will offer choices, this gives children some control over their own behaviour, it shows respect for them as individuals and encourages independence
- Staff will redirect the child by offering a purposeful alternative or giving them a choice of activities
- Staff will **facilitate problem solving** to help the child resolve conflicts
- Staff will use logical consequences that make an obvious connection between the child's behaviour and the action that follows.
- Staff will demonstrate awareness of each child's abilities and difficulties e.g. lagging skills

**Redirection** is the method of solving difficult situations. A staff member will aid the child in leaving the problem area and will be given guidance to find a new area of interest. The child may be given a choice of activities. If this method does not work, then the child will be instructed to sit out for a time of reflection. **THIS IS NOT A TIME OUT.** The child will sit with a staff member while the child is given time to think about their actions. When the child appears to be calm and ready to return to the activities of the room, the staff member will assist them in returning to the activity or finding a new one.

### **Child Self-Regulation and Facilitation Policy:**

**The Stepping Stones Children's Learning Centre recognize the connection between emotional wellbeing and social and cognitive development in all children and they are**

**committed to fostering each child's autonomy and independence, and by helping every child develop the ability to self-regulate.**

**We do not use time out or any other form of discipline; instead we teach children how to manage their own behaviour through the methods mentioned below:**

Self-regulation requires a child to develop the ability to manage his emotions and control bodily functions as well as maintain focus and attention (Gillespie & Seibel, 2006). Children develop at different rates in all of the developmental domains and this is true for self regulation also. Since self-regulation is a complex process that allows children to control their attention, thoughts, emotions and behaviors, it warrants intentional planning on the part of the teacher (Bodrova & Leong, 2007).

Self-regulation is not a skill that develops in isolation. Physical behaviors are the first behaviors children are able to self-regulate, such as thumb sucking in infancy. Toddler behaviors might include intentional coordination of walking and reaching to obtain a wanted toy. Emotional behaviors, such as spontaneous sharing of a toy with a peer, come later. Emotional self-regulation includes children gradually learning how to manage their emotions, which leads to children interacting with their peers and adults more effectively when they are upset, frustrated or embarrassed (Kolestelnik, Whirren, Soderman & Gregory, 2009). Behavioral self-regulation includes the ability to inhibit one's actions and remembering and following rules (Blair, 2009). This form of self-regulation takes practice and repeated learning opportunities before children demonstrate self-regulation over their behavior. The most complex, and last to develop, form of self-regulation is cognitive self-regulation. Cognitive self-regulation appears in four year olds as they develop their ability to plan (e.g., what they are going to do in learning centers) and utilize proper responses (e.g., listening when a story is read).

Children develop and learn different strategies based on different emotions. Individual differences, including temperament, and the ability to control reactions are important in understanding self-regulation.

**Why is the ability to self-regulate important?**

The critical window for self-regulation takes place from birth to age five when children develop the foundational skills for self-regulation. During this time, adults are helping children to build the necessary skills that are critical to regulate thinking and behavior demonstrates empathy to peers. As Riley, San Juan, Klinkner & Ramminger (2008) point out in *Social and Emotional Development; Connecting Science and Practice in Early Childhood Settings*, "The ability to inhibit one's own actions does not come naturally to children; they must learn it" (p. 66).

**How do children learn to self-regulate?**

**Self-Regulation in the body:**

Self-regulation helps us manage the combination of energy and tension we feel in our bodies. Children have some skills to deal with stress and challenges but sometimes the effort to manage their feelings is exhausting and they cannot cope. The Educator can support children in the following way:

- Helping children slow down and get their energy level into the right state for a situation by giving lots of one on one time, physical contact such as hugs or holding their hand, offering fidget toys or activities to keep their hands busy, teaching relaxation or encouraging physical activity.
- Helping children get energized when they feel listless or bored by engaging them in physical activity, outdoor play time, and games, and by motivation by the adult, through a show of increased energy.
- Helping children identify their own energy level and what they can do to feel better.
- Meeting the child's basic needs, and understanding how they feel in their bodies
- Building a positive and caring relationship with each child, will teach children how to care for themselves.

### **Self-Regulation and Emotions:**

Emotional self-regulation means being able to understand and manage emotions, a child must be able to manage their fears and anxieties and control their feelings when necessary. The Educator can assist the child in the following ways:

- Comfort and support children when they are upset
- Share in their joy when they are happy
- Teach children to talk about their feelings, it helps children develop awareness of emotions
- Be a good role model when managing your own emotions, let children see you control your feelings
- Focus on how a child feels physically when upset, sometime a hug or helping them take deep breathes, assists the child in managing their emotions. Remember that by getting to know the child the adult will be able to find out what works for each child, for some children it may be leaving the room, helping with a task, having a drink of water and or sitting in a quiet place

### **Self-Regulation of Thinking:**

Self-Regulation also involves developing thinking and learning skills, like memory, reasoning and problem solving. Good thinking skills enable children to make good decisions about their behavior and interact with other children. How can we help children develop these skills?

- Reduce noise and distractions in the classroom
- Remove excess art work and posters on the walls
- Create more natural light in the classroom, turn off fluorescent lights when possible, use smaller sources of light, like table lamp, or natural sunlight
- Reduce strong smells such as cleaning products, food smells, perfume etc
- Talk to the child about topics they are interested in and extend the conversation, to capture their interest
- Read to the child and talk about the book, allow them time to recall the story and add to it through discussion, support their ideas and value their input
- Develop planning and problem solving skills by playing card and board game, puzzles, following directions, making models from instructions, helping an adult to fix or make something, games that involve following steps
- Define age-appropriate limits to help a child know what is expected of him/her.

**A child's ability to use their thinking skills is greatly affected by how they feel, both emotionally and physically.**

### **Social Self-Regulation**

- Social self-regulation is about being able to adapt our behavior and thinking to match social situations. The Educator can support the child in the following ways: Teach children to understand and respond to non-verbal cues like tone of voice, facial expression and body language
- Teaching children to take turns in conversation
- Help them to understand how emotions affect other's behavior
- Help children build empathy
- Educators can model appropriate responses by participating in conversations with children and facilitating peer-to-peer support when conflict arises
- Educators can provide hints and prompts to assist children in self-regulation. This support may take the form of answering a question, assisting them in completing an activity, or providing words for a child's action. The adult may model self-talk to demonstrate the use of "talking things out" to help make a decision. Suggesting a child observe a peer when that child has managed their strong emotions in a positive way is another example of modeling.

### **Child Care Supervision Policy for Students and Volunteers**

Stepping Stones Children's Learning Centre stands firmly on the vision that all children enrolled in the centre will be effectively supervised at all times. It is the operators' responsibility in accordance with Day Nursery Act Regulations that every child who is in attendance in a day care location is supervised by an adult at all times (DNA Regulation 262).

Under no circumstances will direct unsupervised access be granted to anyone under the age of 18 years and who is not an employee of Stepping Stones Children's Learning Centre, Volunteers, Co-Op Students and Placement Students are not to be counted in staffing ratio of all children in the centre and to provide direction to staff in regards to the supervision of Volunteers, Co-Op Students and Placement Students.

### **Vulnerable Sector Check Policy:**

A Vulnerable Sector Check must be completed for all full time, and part time staff, volunteers working with the children (over the age of 18) and students prior to placement at Stepping Stones Children's Learning Centre. If a person over the age of 18 cannot obtain a Vulnerable Sector Check, they will be required to obtain a Criminal Reference check. Findings of Guilt under the Youth Criminal Justice Act within the applicable disclosure period may appear on a Vulnerable Sector Check or Criminal Reference Check.

### **Procedure:**

All staff, volunteers and students are required to obtain a Vulnerable Person Criminal background check prior to their placement at Stepping. The successful applicant, student or volunteer is responsible for all costs involved with the check. A Vulnerable Sector Check can be obtained from your local OPP detachment, Brockville police Station, or online, and can take up

to 30 days. A positive Vulnerable Sector Check does not necessarily preclude hiring of the potential candidate. A decision will be made after the agency has looked at the nature of the offence(s), including the circumstances surrounding the charges and convictions, and the specific duties of the potential employee or volunteer. Other considerations could include references from past employers and rehabilitative and other efforts subsequently made by the candidate. If a Vulnerable Sector Check cannot be completed prior to hiring, a conditional offer will be in place until the reference is received. At that time, the offer can be rescinded should the agency consider it appropriate. The candidate will not be left alone at any time with a child, until the Vulnerable Sector Check has been received. The use of information obtained through the Canadian Police Information Computer system regarding outstanding criminal code charges and criminal code convictions for which a pardon has not been granted does not contravene the Ontario Human Rights Code. A copy (a copy of the VSC will be signed by the Director after viewing the original) or the original VSC will be kept on file, and renewed every five years. Every year after the initial VSC an Offence Declaration will be signed by an employee or volunteer and kept on file

**Posting of Serious Occurrences**, the safety and well-being of our children in licensed child care programs is the highest priority. Operators of licensed child care centres and private-home day care agencies work diligently to provide a safe, creative and nurturing environment for each child. In spite of all the best precautions, serious occurrences can sometimes take place.

The Ontario government has introduced a new policy that requires licensed child care centres and private-home day care agencies to post information about serious occurrences that happen at a centre or a home location effective November 1, 2011. To support increased transparency and access to information, a “Serious Occurrence Notification Form” must be posted at the centre or home location in a visible area for 10 days.

**A serious occurrence could include:**

- Serious injury to a child,
- Fire or other disaster on site,
- Complaint about service standard

*Licensed child care centres and private-home day care agencies are already required to report serious occurrences to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, which is responsible for child care licensing. This new policy requires child care operators to post information in their facilities so that parents also have access to it.*

This posting will give parents information about the incident and outline follow-up actions taken and the outcomes, while respecting the privacy of the individuals involved. Longer-term actions taken by the operator will also be included to help prevent similar incidents in the future, where applicable.

Many factors may lead to a serious occurrence report. A serious occurrence does not necessarily mean that an operator is out of compliance with licensing requirements or that children are at risk in the child care program.

This new policy supports the government's efforts to increase access to information about licensed child care programs in Ontario. This includes the recent launch of child care licensing inspection findings on the Licensed Child Care Website which is available at:

<http://www.ontario.ca/ONT/portal61/licensedchildcare>

We hope that this handbook outlines our policies and procedures for you. It is important to the staff of our Centre that you are clear on the information printed so that you and your child get the most out of this Child Care experience.

## **Parent Issues and Concerns Policy**

### **Policy**

#### **General**

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take an active role in our child care centre and regularly discuss what their child(ren) are experiencing with our program. As supported by our program statement, we support positive and responsive interactions among the children, parents/guardians, child care providers and staff, and foster the engagement of and ongoing communication with parents/guardians about the program and their children. Our staff are available to engage parents/guardians in conversations and support a positive experience during every interaction.

All issues and concerns raised by parents/guardians are taken seriously by Stepping Stones Children's Learning Centre and will be addressed. Every effort will be made to address and resolve issues and concerns to the satisfaction of all parties and as quickly as possible.

Issues/concerns may be brought forward verbally or in writing. Responses and outcomes will be provided verbally, or in writing upon request. The level of detail provided to the parent/guardian will respect and maintain the confidentiality of all parties involved.

An initial response to an issue or concern will be provided to parents/guardians within one full business day(s). The person who raised the issue/concern will be kept informed throughout the resolution process.

Investigations of issues and concerns will be fair, impartial and respectful to parties involved.

#### **Confidentiality**

Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of parents/guardians, children, staff, students and volunteers, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities or a Children's Aid Society).

#### **Conduct**

Our centre maintains high standards for positive interaction, communication and role-modeling for children. Harassment and discrimination will therefore not be tolerated from any party.

If at any point a parent/guardian, provider or staff feels uncomfortable, threatened, abused or belittled, they may immediately end the conversation and report the situation to the supervisor and/or licensee.

## **Concerns about the Suspected Abuse or Neglect of a child**

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, is required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect.

If a parent/guardian expresses concerns that a child is being abused or neglected, the parent will be advised to contact the [local Children's Aid Society](#) (CAS) directly.

Persons who become aware of such concerns are also responsible for reporting this information to CAS as per the "Duty to Report" requirement under the *Child and Family Services Act*.

For more information, visit

<http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/childrensaidd/reportingabuse/index.aspx>

Please note that any exception to the proceeding policies and procedures must be obtained by the owners. Please be sure to read this handbook and sign all consent forms. Remember, if you have any questions feel free to ask the staff.

**Welcome to our Centre.**